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THE GOSSIP OF AN AMBASSADOR

BY LOUISE MORGAN SILL

WHEN Thomas François Chabod, Marquis of Saint-Maurice, was sent in 1667 by his royal master, the Duke of Savoy, Charles Emmanuel II., on a special mission to the brilliant and intriguing Court of Louis XIV., he was charged by the Duke to keep him advised not only of affairs of graver importance, but of all the gossip of the Court. For the Duke was the son of Christine de France, sister of Louis XIV., and therefore first cousin to the King; and being a man of gallantry besides, it was not unnatural that he should feel a keen interest in the comedies and tragedies of manners at Paris, St.-Germain, and Versailles. The result of these royal commands was a voluminous correspondence from the most faithful and obedient of diplomats, a correspondence which, reposing in the archives at Turin, would fill fifteen or twenty doughty volumes, but from which the editor, Monsieur Jean Lemoine, has drawn one volume only. It is this volume, with its picturesque additions to seventeenth-century memoirs, with which we are concerned.

The Marquis of Saint-Maurice, when he made his careful and dignified entrance into Paris, was not a stranger to the French Court. His grandfather had been three times Ambassador to France, his father (loved by Richelieu and Mazarin) had once represented Savoy at the same Court, and he himself was personally known to Louis XIV., having presented to him in 1661 the compliments of the Duke of Savoy on the birth of the Dauphin and having brought to the latter a wonderful jeweled drum as a gift from the royal infant of Savoy. "Monsieur le Dauphin,"* he wrote to his master at home, "is a handsome prince, with a lively mind, and talks well, but he is proud and obstinate and fears no one but the King."

* Louis, known as "le Grand Dauphin," born November 1st, 1661.

He gives an interesting picture of the royal little boy of six receiving the Ambassador from Savoy:

"There were guards under arms and an officer at the door, and within sat Monsieur le Dauphin wearing his hat, which he lifted to me. I made him a reverence and presented your Royal Highness's compliments; he arose with his hat in his hand, and his governess, Madame la Maréchale de la Mothe [Houdancourt] answered as if to instruct him what to say. I then presented the drum with which he was delighted, and it was necessary to explain everything to him."

He wore a doublet and hose and a little wig.

Later Saint-Maurice writes the Duke of the severity of the Dauphin's education under Montausier. Aged about seven, he was separated from his father and mother, lodged at the Louvre while his parents were at the Tuilleries, and saw them but once a week:

"He is not allowed to do anything he wishes nor eat anything he asks for; he is threatened with whipping and put into prison; but these punishments have now ceased, as he has become very submissive and has lost the headstrong humor which the Queen and the ladies had allowed him to indulge in their fear of angering him."

Saint-Maurice, therefore, in consideration of his father's services and of his own, had been accorded by Louis XIV. certain seigniorial rights in France, and when he reached that country in 1667 he was received with all the honors given to ambassadors from kings. To be a successful ambassador to this Court, Saint-Maurice wrote to the Duke that it was necessary to speak French well, and to have a knowledge of general history and somewhat of war, "for one or the other form all the conversations." He added that it was also necessary to have an open and liberal mind and *savoir faire*, and to be familiar with treaties "and the interests of Princes." All these qualifications Saint-Maurice possessed, including a perfect familiarity with French, which is not surprising when we remember the affiliations of the House of Savoy with the royal family of France.

Although the King was only twenty-four years old at this time, he was dictating laws to Europe and attracting universal attention. Saint-Maurice describes him as he appeared during his first visit. He wore a black velvet doublet with gold-embroidered half-vest; his hat was on his head and a cane in his hand. The ambassador bowed profoundly, whereupon the King removed his hat and replaced it. He

seemed neither proud nor severe. On the contrary, his face was "*fort doux*."

Saint-Maurice reached Paris in April, and it was not until September that he was raised by Duke Charles Emmanuel to the full rank of *ambassadeur ordinaire*. His delight in this mark of his royal master's confidence is spontaneous, and he writes him renewed assurances of his unswerving devotion. With the sense of a practical man, and one fully conscious of the responsibility his diplomatic honors lay upon him, he proceeds to explain his financial status and the necessities for expenditure in order to sustain his rank and reflect properly the luster of his master. He reminds the Duke of his limited means, that he has a mother, a wife, and eleven children (the children became thirteen before the worthy gentleman's embassy was terminated), and naïvely adds that if the Duke possesses an extra old dais, not then in use, covered perhaps with velvet and with gold or silver trimmings, he would much appreciate its loan, as it would save him expenditure for something which would be a superfluity when his visit to France should have been concluded.

Behold our ambassador, then, launched in the full glory of what seemed to him a great mission. He is so perfectly the royal man of a royal master that the reader is curiously puzzled at times to know what traits of vanity or greatness are individual to the man himself or merely the reflection of those of the Duke whom he serves. He writes more approvingly of those who accord him the more honor, never forgetting to add that it is his master's honor only which he is concerned fittingly to represent. He gossips of Court intrigues like any chattering Marquise or Duchesse, but it is only to please his master who wishes to be amused. He never mentions Molière or Racine because, as he reminds the Duke, his son, the young Count of Saint-Maurice, had been commissioned by his Royal Highness to report all the news of the drama. He deliberately cultivates the society of ladies of quality for the purpose of gathering gossip from a fruitful if not always reliable source, and even uses their acquaintance when possible to further the affairs of his adored Duke. Madame de la Fayette, friend of his own Duchess of Savoy, of Madame de Sévigné, and many other illustrious personages of her time, was apparently a powerful friend of Saint-Maurice's and aided him in obtaining the recall of the Marquis of Villars, an imperious and vindictive

man who had been sent by Louis XIV. to the Court at Turin and whom Saint-Maurice suspected of political intrigue harmful to the House of Savoy. The younger ladies Saint-Maurice was in fear of, for, it appears, a curious reason. He explains to the Duke that he did not see them often because they would undoubtedly turn his deafness to ridicule—a vivid commentary on the current conception of manners even at a time and in a Court where manners were a fine art. He complains frequently of the lack of deference of the French to strangers and the offensive pride of some of the ladies of the Court. “An ambassador of rank,” he candidly writes, “cannot wait upon ladies who treat every one with scorn and *hauteur*.” This pride of the women at a time when their influence was indeed effective brought about some extraordinary incidents, among which Saint-Maurice recounts the following:

“One evening at Versailles when the Queen was playing cards the Countess of Soissons—cousin by marriage to the Duke of Savoy—who was sitting near Her Majesty, left the room. The Countess of Gramont, an Englishwoman proud of her position as relative of Charles II. of England, was *croupier*. She took the vacant tabouret of the Countess of Soissons. The latter, returning, said, ‘That is my seat.’ The Countess of Gramont replied, coldly, without moving, ‘We shall see.’ The other lady retorted only by scornful laughter. The Count of Gramont interfered and said to the Countess of Soissons: ‘Madame, one does not nail down the chairs here’ (*on ne cloue pas ici les chaises*). ‘My wife will remain where she is; we are of as good a house as yourself.’ Although the Queen overheard all, she dared not speak, though one of her ladies endeavored to restore peace. Later the King commanded the Count and Countess of Gramont to apologize to the Countess of Soissons; whereupon the Count’s brother, a marshal of France, demanded that the entire company of the marshals of France should take cognizance of the affair. These judicious gentlemen decided that the apology must be offered.”*

At about the same time the Countess of Gramont, her *hauteur* in no wise diminished despite the check it had received, entered the Queen’s coach uninvited as the latter was about to take an airing. The Queen commanded her to enter the second coach, but this hardy lady, persisting in taking her seat, replied that it was not suitable to her rank to ride in a coach behind, and “the good Queen suffered it all without another word.” The only comment Saint-Maurice allowed himself in relating this trivial but significant tale was that the pride of the Countess of Gramont caused her “*faire bien des pas de mauvaise grâce*.”

* *Lettres sur la Cour de Louis XIV.* By Jean Lemoine, p. 375.

The patience of the Queen was marvelous. Daughter of Philip IV. of Spain by his first wife, Elizabeth of France, young, proud, a mother, she led, on the whole, a life of neglect. Saint-Maurice continually speaks of her with pity. "She is an example of piety and virtue!" he exclaims, and adds that she is not only neglected by her royal husband, fatally absorbed by the "*dames de la faveur*," but by all the Court. She occupied herself with her children—most of whom died in quick succession—with her religion, card-playing, and the Spanish comedy. The ladies and gentlemen of the Court were frankly bored by the latter diversion, and the poor Queen found it difficult to gather an audience for her native drama. The theater was always empty and cold, says Saint-Maurice. He admires the Queen for resigning herself so commendably to her unhappy life, and explains that she is controlled by the Carmelite nuns of the Rue Boulois, "of whom the King avails himself for that purpose." That the Queen had something of a struggle to achieve this spiritual resignation is made plain by the testimony of Mademoiselle de Montpensier in her Memoirs. She relates how, when Mademoiselle de la Vallière, uninvited, visited the Queen at Compiègne, the latter "wept, was attacked by nausea, and refused all food." Mesdames de la Vallière and de Montespan frequently rode in the Queen's own coach, and in many ways their society was forced upon her. The Queen at this time was twenty-nine years of age, Mademoiselle de la Vallière twenty-three, and Madame de Montespan, daughter of the Duke of Montemart and just beginning to receive the special notice of the King, was twenty-six. Saint-Maurice writes that in order to obtain news of La Vallière, soon raised to the rank of Duchess, the courtiers and ladies arranged that their gentlemen-in-waiting should intrigue with the *femmes de chambre* of the King's favorite, but upon the Duchess becoming aware of the situation her women were all discharged.

Saint-Maurice found the French Court much to his taste. He wrote to his good-natured master :

"At the King's levee the Court is the most beautiful thing in the world. I was there yesterday, and there were three drawing-rooms full of people of quality—a crowd. It was incredibly difficult to enter the room where His Majesty was. There were more than eight hundred coaches in front of the Louvre."

Extravagance of every sort ran riot, of which our am-

bassador gives examples in a letter written to the Duchess of Savoy in 1670, when the Court went to Chambord for rest and diversion :

“ The doublets of the Court ladies for this journey are horribly dear. They cost each two thousand écus ” (six thousand francs) “ with the skirt, and the ladies have five or six changes. I saw those of the Countess of Soissons.”

Continuing his gossip for the benefit of the royal lady, he writes :

“ The newest fancy is for silver boxes holding Chinese orange-trees, which are kept all summer in the rooms. I have seen two which were valued at six hundred francs.”

But Louis expressed himself as satisfied with the financial administration of Colbert. According to Saint-Maurice, he said :

“ Never was kingdom so well ordered and rich as his own; that he had ninety-two millions of revenue; that with thirty-five or thirty-six he paid all the expense so carefully that he saved every year fifty-six millions for war.”

Saint-Maurice continually praises the King’s kindness and generosity, while alluding also to his dignity and severity. He says that Louis spent ten and twenty times more than any other French King. “ Never was there so generous a King to his servants and all who approach him.” And, again, “ One never saw King so much *honnête homme*.” Nevertheless, in 1670 there were frequent rumors that the King’s coffers were low. Colbert demanded two millions advance from the farmers-general, who refused it. The King’s enormous expenses for his palaces, his pleasures, his journeys, his buildings, the camp and the navy, required all the financial genius of Colbert to counterbalance. This minister had also a genius for nepotism, and Saint-Maurice avers that he was forever assiduous in promoting the welfare of his relatives.

Meanwhile the King, whether at war or play, lived an ordered and industrious life, with set hours for work, meals, retiring, and rising. If Saint-Maurice has to complain that Louis appeared to avoid the dignitaries of his Court, that he spoke with the foreign ministers only at the audiences, or when he sent for them on occasion to discuss some special affair, he is pleased also to report to his master at home that the King always raises his hat to him with marked

courtesy, and that his wife is treated with great kindness and honor by the Queen. He often refers to the King's perfect dignity and restraint; to the fact that he was very secretive concerning his plans and policies, and that even those nearest him dared not question him. Louis was jealous of his reputation for ability and wisdom, wished to divide with no one the credit for his own ideas, and, above all, desired it should not be thought that he was governed by his ministers. He took care also that the latter should not share this delusion. He was jealous also of attention. When Colbert's young son, studying at the Collège de Clermont, distinguished himself brilliantly with a thesis, the Court and everybody went to hear the precocious scholar, and Saint-Maurice testifies that the King's displeasure at the social honor paid to Colbert was manifest. On the other hand, Louis spared himself no trouble in order to perform his duty. He held council twice a day with his three ministers and sometimes the marshal of Turenne. Saint-Maurice writes in 1667:

"The King works incessantly and all day. In his hours of relaxation he plays tennis, inspects on horseback his household troops, makes a few visits, calls upon Madame de la Vallière, and now and then there is a ball or comedy at the Tuilleries."

Turenne warned the King that he gave himself too much care and would become ill, to which Louis replied, "Monsieur le Maréchal, you do not love my glory to speak thus to me." One reads in *La Gazette de France* of that day that after his religious devotions the King touched a large number of sick people at the Palace of the Tuilleries. "The King does everything with a good grace and without *empressement*," wrote Saint-Maurice.

Louis, though still little more than a boy, was also engaged with his Memoirs, upon which, Saint-Maurice reports, he worked in the evening, "après avoir donné le petit bon soir." These are the "*Mémoires pour l'Instruction du Dauphin*," and were edited by the President of Périgny, to whom the sheets were sent as the King finished them. They furnish not the most insignificant evidence of the grave sense of responsibility visible in so many of the acts of Louis XIV. His fondness for the society of women Saint-Maurice explains by the delight he had in their presence, the great amusement he derived from their conversation, and the protection they insured him from too great fa-

miliarity of the courtiers, "which he does not want." The idea of this powerful King being protected by clever and beautiful women of quality from the encroachments and self-interested intrigues of the gentlemen of his entourage forms a novel picture in the reader's mind.

When, in 1667, Louis led his troops in person to the war in Flanders our ambassador thought it wise to accompany him, and asks his master's approval should the King accede to his request. Saint-Maurice was then in early middle age and characteristically complains that the King's Minister of War, Louvois, wanted only young men for the army, the King wanted what Louvois did, and the result was that old and experienced officers were not used. His own intention was merely to pay court to the King and to study military conditions and events. Later, launched upon his expedition, he enthusiastically praises the French troops:

"I am struck with the admirable behavior of the soldiers. Never were any so hardy, better disciplined, or more obedient."

And again, "Never have I seen such discipline among troops." There were perfect alignment and complete silence. Later he refers to desertions and lack of order and complaints against Louvois for having badly supplied the needs of the army. The army even grumbled against a brief visit which Louis paid during the campaign to Compiègne to see the Queen and the ladies of the Court who had come thither with the army. The latter blamed Turenne for allowing the King to indulge in this digression from the seat of war; but Louis explains in his Memoirs that he made the journey in an interval of inactivity not only to refresh himself in the company of the Queen and his children, but to demonstrate to his people how easily in the midst of war he could return to Paris in case of necessity and to set at rest certain disquietudes within the kingdom.

This war—undertaken in order to wrest from Spain such lands as belonged by "*droit de dévolution*" to Queen Marie Thérèse—was popular in the Court, and Saint-Maurice exclaims that everybody is going into debt, pledging valuable silver and jewels, and pressing his farmers for more and more money to defray the incidental costs for equipages, and so forth. Both the ladies and gentlemen submitted with a good grace to the inconveniences of traveling with an army rather than be left behind at Versailles when the King was

absent. He writes his Duke also of the many and various difficulties during this campaign:

"I have not yet been able to see any of the Ministers, and they have been for days at a time unable to see the King and have also suffered with hunger."

His own coach and luggage, he writes, are continually separated from him; that he has not yet even seen his bed, but has slept under a tree wrapped in his cloak, with the exception of one evening when, by good luck, his coach arrived at midnight. He eats as he can, and never, he adds, "have there been such great inconveniences in an army." But he never permits himself to complain to the French, and blames his own stupidity in not having brought mules, the only hope "in an army like this," and consoles himself by the reflection that few others are in better case.

As for the King, he worked as faithfully as usual. He went every night to the bivouac and remained until sunrise. During one such absence his camp took fire and was completely destroyed—tents, furniture, horses, coaches, his silver melted in part, and several persons injured. Saint-Maurice says nothing of the King's submission to this inconvenience, except that upon receiving the news he remained at the bivouac and slept in a neighboring tent. Louis's own tents are described as "the most sumptuous and spacious imaginable, lined with damask or 'satinade.' In each are three or four chandeliers of gilded wood." It is amusing to read that even here the King is always dressed with care, that he wears his mustache *retroussée*, and is sometimes engaged for half an hour before the mirror in waxing it; that he wears a linen shirt, a cravat, clocks, and a cloth doublet; that he spends more than an hour and a half at his toilet, but does not suffer any ennui because his gentlemen constantly converse with him and tell him amusing stories.

Saint-Maurice complacently reports to the Duke the thousand and one courtesies shown him by the courtiers in the camp, but is piqued because the King has not commanded his presence at the royal table. The ambassador contrives to have business with Louis at the dinner hour, hoping that his presence will incite the King's favor, but the harmless ruse is a failure. The King's table was oval, and the royal food was not separated from that of the others. All who dined with him wore their hats. During this campaign "one

never knows the hour when the King will eat, but it is never before four or five in the afternoon." But the general regularity of Louis's habits remained unbroken and his only thoughts were of war and glory. Saint-Maurice bears no ill-will toward him for not requiring his presence at dinner, and writes, "The King speaks little, but always good sense." To his devotion to his troops Saint-Maurice also repeatedly testifies.

After the successful Flanders campaign the Court remained at St.-Germain, where the King attended assiduously to affairs or played tennis, went hawking, and "made love." Of the last occupation Saint-Maurice says there is so much gossip that he can scarcely know whom to believe and whom to doubt. The rumors of the King's favor toward various ladies rose and fell daily like reports of the modern stock-market.

But the King, despite these vagaries of his private life, never loses sight of the welfare of his kingdom nor of the splendor of his own glory and dreams of conquest. In 1670 he is organizing mock battles for keeping the army in good condition. There are two army corps, himself commanding one, the Marshal of Créquy the other. Saint-Maurice writes:

"Yesterday the King was drawn into an ambuscade and made prisoner by the Marquis of Villeroy, then rescued by his own corps, who at once put the enemy to rout. These exercises are extremely fatiguing at midday and in the greatest heat" (it was the month of August of which he writes), "but are marvelously effective for keeping officers and soldiers in training. Never has there been such regularity and discipline and never an army so well ordered. Among other things, the soldiers observe silence for four hours of each day."

After further praise of this kind he diplomatically suggests that if the Duke of Savoy should graciously compliment the French troops he would give great pleasure to the King and to the Minister of War, Monsieur Louvois.

The Court had resumed at St.-Germain its usual amusements. Saint-Maurice writes that the air is full of intrigue and flirtation, and throws some curious light upon the current conception of honor. If ladies fall out with their admirers, he explains, the latter do not hesitate to betray them and even to show their letters to the society of the Court, which habit must have lent a caustic spice to daily conversation. These were days when crossing the Channel to England was described as "a long and perilous voyage." In-

land traveling was slow and difficult as well. Returning from Chambord to Paris on one occasion all the coach horses of the Court perished of the dryness and dust and Their Majesties were obliged to borrow horses for the moment from the nobility. The latter were allowed to buy and sell lucrative posts among themselves like so many trades-people. The Duke of Chaulnes, when he went as Ambassador to Rome, had permission to sell "*la lieutenance générale de Roi*," which he had bought from the Duke of Mazarin for four hundred thousand francs. To illustrate the inconsistent indifference to rank or title, Saint-Maurice describes the crowd at the baptism of the Dauphin at St.-Germain when Marshal Turenne entered. Finding that they did not make way for him, Turenne grew angry, "pushed every one about for a quarter of an hour, and overturned the meat which was being taken to the Dauphin." Turenne afterward said to Saint-Maurice, who had witnessed the incident, that "the French have no regard for any one"—of which we shall later have further proof.

Our ambassador now reports the star of the Duchesse de la Vallière descending, while that of the Duchesse de Montespan is in the ascendant. In honor of the latter, the King gave a fête of great splendor at Versailles, the invitations being issued in her name. The gardens were brilliantly lighted with great statues and vases of fire, the collations were spread in the *allées*, and no effort was spared to turn the playground of Versailles into a veritable fairyland of flowers, fountains, grottoes, beautiful women, dances, and comedies. But the mismanagement of the crowd was insufferable, and Saint-Maurice complains vehemently in his accounts of the festival. At times there was complete and most unkingly disorder. Ladies and gentlemen were pushed, ambassadors hustled and badly placed. Even the Queen herself was delayed half an hour at the door of the theater. Saint-Maurice writes that the function was in the hands of officers and body-guards who knew only the art of war and were incompetent to control a social affair of such magnitude. The ambassador from Venice sarcastically observed that as they were invited by "*l'Inconnu*" and not by the King, they had no ground for formal complaint of the disrespectful treatment to which they were subjected, whereupon he retired to his coach, there to await the daylight. But every one agreed that the fête was the most superb

that had ever been seen. When, later, the noise of complaint reached the King's ear he was much annoyed and those who had been in charge were severely reprimanded.

Saint-Maurice says little of the King's activity in public works in this volume, in building and studying the welfare of his people; but he writes that His Majesty gambles every day five or six thousand pistoles, "though he almost always wins," and that those who played with him affected kingly airs and scorn of money. But Louis had the strength as well as the weakness of a generous heart. At the death of his sister-in-law, the Duchess of Orleans,* he was overwhelmed with grief.

"His Majesty has been to Saint-Cloud to sprinkle holy water on the body of the late Madame, where he was seen to weep. No King of France ever before performed such a ceremony, not even for father or mother; they never enter the presence of corpses."

It was not her beauty for which Louis loved the Duchess of Orleans, whom Saint-Maurice had thus described in the candor of this private correspondence:

"She is much faded; some of her teeth are missing, and those which remain are very bad; she is losing her figure and commences to resemble her mother."

We now approach the end of this interesting embassy to France, which, though so successful, was to be followed by dire misfortune and the implacable enmity of Louis XIV. In 1673 Saint-Maurice, whose modest fortune was unequal to the enormous expense of his position, obtained his recall and returned to Savoy. He left many regrets in the French Court, where he had acquired general esteem, and the King presented to him a service of silver gilt. On reaching home his own sovereign, Charles Emmanuel II., conferred upon his faithful Minister the supreme distinction of the collar of the order of "*l'Annonciade*." Yet in the end it was his loyalty to the House of Savoy which wrought his downfall.

On the Duke's death he became Chief Councilor to the Duchess Regent, and it was his ministry which later made her son, Victor Amédée II., the most popular of the Princes of Savoy. During all this time Saint-Maurice retained the friendship of Louis XIV.; and as one of the strongest principles of the Court of Versailles was to sustain in foreign

* "Madame," Henrietta of England, sister of Charles II.

courts every possible support for its own policies, Louis recommended succeeding ambassadors to Turin to cultivate the good-will of Saint-Maurice. The latter's own interests were involved in the policies of Louis, but the moment those interests came into conflict with his duty to the Duke of Savoy he did not hesitate to sacrifice them. In 1667 France refused to pay customs at Suse, which constituted a large revenue for Savoy. Saint-Maurice was sent to France to negotiate this affair, but Louis's ministers refused to agree with his arguments, and his mission was a failure. Private misfortunes also assailed the ex-ambassador; one of his sons became involved in intrigue at the Court of Turin, another brought disgrace to the family by a crazy attempt to set fire to the royal palace. But these enemies within were less powerful than those without, and it was, in fact, the King of France who eventually destroyed him, curiously enough through the following incident of the Man with the Iron Mask.*

The fortified town of Casal, fifteen leagues from Turin, was then regarded as the key to Piedmont and of the Spanish possessions of the Milanese, and it was Louis's intention to seize that place and occupy it. It was possessed by the Duke of Mantoue, who, after long negotiations and the receipt of much money from Louis, had ceded Casal to the French. In December, 1678, the Duke's secretary, Count Mattioli, arrived in Paris in order to conclude the necessary ratifications. The occupation of Casal by the French troops was to occur in the following February and every precaution had been taken to expedite the affair and to preserve inviolable secrecy. Troops and munitions of war had been sent to Pignerol, and Catinat, who had charge of the expedition, had been imprisoned in the citadel of Pignerol in order to disarm all suspicion before the moment of the *coup* should arrive. All seemed well, when Count Mattioli failed to appear at the appointed rendezvous, and in a short time the news of France's designs upon Casal, and therefore Piedmont, resounded throughout Europe. Louis, amazed and angry at this exposure, was compelled to abandon the enterprise.

It was not long before the mystery of the sudden check was solved. Count Mattioli on his return from France had stopped for three agreeable days at the Court of Turin and

* Introduction to *Lettres sur la Cour de Louis XIV.*, page 30.

had there betrayed Louis's designs to the Duchess Regent. Alarmed on all sides, the Duchess, fearing either to allow Louis to proceed or to lose his friendship, chose to expose to him the treason of Mattioli. Louis ordered the punishment of Mattioli, who was lured into an ambush in the environs of Turin and imprisoned in the citadel of Pignerol, where the unfortunate man remained for many years and became known to history as the Man with the Iron Mask.*

As the Duchess's only confidant had been her loyal Minister, Saint-Maurice, it became only too evident that it was he who had published the plans of the French King and checkmated the undertaking. The Duchess was powerless to protect him from the unrelenting anger of Louis XIV. and his ruin—caused by nothing whatever but the utmost fidelity to his own sovereign—was the inevitable outcome.

LOUISE MORGAN SILL.

* Funck-Brentano, *Légendes et Archives de la Bastille*. Jean Lemoine, *Lettres sur la Cour de Louis XIV.*